

## Message Text

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APPROVED BY EUR:RDVINE

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OSD:ADM. HOLCOMBE

PM/ISP:GPOWERS

C:RHOPPER

S/S:APSHANKLE

EUR:AAHARTMAN(SUBS)

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE

INFO USMISSION NATO PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY

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EXDIS

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MPOL, NATO

SUBJECT: SECDEF LETTER TO MOD LEBER - TANK HARMONIZATION

REF: STATE 241558 DTG 290121Z SEP 76 TOSEC 280016

1. REQUEST EMBASSY DELIVER TEXT OF FOLLOWING LETTER TO MOD LEBER, ALONG WITH THE ATTACHED TEXT OF 28 SEPT SECDEF LETTER TO CONGRESSIONAL XM-1 TANK PANEL, AND THE 28 SEPT RESOLUTION OF HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE, FORWARDED BY REFTEL. BEGIN TEXT OF LETTER TO MOD:

THE HONORABLE GEORG LEBER

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MINISTER OF DEFENSE

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

DEAR GEORG:

YOU WILL HAVE HEARD BY NOW THAT THE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES ADOPTED A RESOLUTION ON SEPT 28, STATING ITS VIEW THAT CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE XM-1 PROGRAM CAN BEST BE ASSURED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE'S MEETING CERTAIN PRESCRIBED CRITERIA CONCERNING THE PROCUREMENT OF THE TANK, ITS TURRET, GUN AND ENGINE.

BILL CLEMENTS, MARTY HOFFMAN AND I IN ADDITION TO OTHER DEFENSE OFFICIALS MADE A MAJOR EFFORT TO PERSUADE THE COMMITTEE THAT THE PROGRAM OUTLINED BY THE ADDENDUM TO THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WHICH YOU AND I SPONSORED IN OUR JOINT STATEMENT OF AUGUST 3 WOULD RESULT IN THE MOST COMBAT-EFFECTIVE TANK FOR THE US ARMY AND WAS THEREFORE IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE UNITED STATES, THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC, AND THE ENTIRE ALLIANCE.

NO RESOLUTION AT ALL WOULD HAVE BEEN IDEAL. WE OPPOSED THE RESOLUTION THAT PASSED BUT SUCCESSFULLY DEFEATED A CONSIDERABLY WORSE RESOLUTION. WE ARE NOW STUDYING THE TEXT OF THE RESOLUTION TO DETERMINE WHAT IT MIGHT MEAN WITH RESPECT TO OUR EFFORTS. WE ARE ALSO ENDEAVORING TO RELATE THIS RESOLUTION BY ONE COMMITTEE OF ONE HOUSE OF OUR LEGISLATURE WITH PUBLIC LAW 94-361, A STATUTE ENACTED BY BOTH HOUSES OF THE CONGRESS ON JULY 14, 1976, WHICH PROVIDES THAT:

"...THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE SHALL, TO THE MAXIMUM FEASIBLE EXTENT, INITIATE AND CARRY OUT PROCUREMENT PROCEDURES THAT PROVIDE FOR THE ACQUISITION OF EQUIPMENT WHICH IS STANDARDIZED OR INTEROPERABLE WITH EQUIPMENT OF OTHER MEMBERS OF THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION ..(TAKING) INTO CONSIDERATION THE COST, FUNCTIONS, QUALITY, AND AVAILABILITY OF THE EQUIPMENT TO BE PROCURED...."

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WE SHALL NEED TIME TO COMPLETE A REVIEW OF THE CONSIDERATIONS INVOLVED AND TO DETERMINE HOW WE SHOULD PROCEED FROM HERE. THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE IS ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEALING WITH THE TANK AND WITH ALL OTHER DEFENSE DEPARTMENT PROCUREMENT PROGRAMS. IN THE EVENT OTHER CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES OR THE CONGRESS WERE TO ADDRESS THIS ISSUE IN THE FUTURE, THAT TOO COULD AFFECT OUR COURSE OF ACTION.

THE CONCEPT THAT COMBAT-EFFECTIVENESS CAN BE ENHANCED THROUGH STANDARDIZATION AND COMMONALITY IS, IN MY VIEW, JUST AS SOUND TODAY AS IT EVER WAS. IT WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE MY FULL SUPPORT AS WE MOVE FORWARD ON THE XM-1 PROGRAM. I SHALL KEEP YOU INFORMED OF FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS. FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE I HAVE ATTACHED THE TEXT OF A SEPTEMBER 28 LETTER WHICH I SENT TO THE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE XM-1 TANK PANEL PRIOR TO THE VOTE, AS WELL AS THE TEXT OF THE COMMITTEE RESOLUTION. SINCERELY, DON RUMSFELD. END TEXT.

2.

TEXT OF SEPTEMBER 28 LETTER FROM SECDEF TO THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE XM-1 TANK PANEL WHICH WAS DELIVERED PRIOR TO ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION AS FOLLOWS:

BEGIN TEXT:

HONORABLE SAMUEL S. STRATTON  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

DEAR CONGRESSMAN STRATTON:

THE REPORT OF THE XM-1 TANK PANEL OF THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE HAS RAISED SEVERAL QUESTIONS RELATIVE TO THE ACTION ON THE TANK PROGRAM. THE REPORT INDICATES SOME MISUNDERSTANDING OF THE ACTIONS TAKEN, THE OBJECTIVE OF THESE ACTIONS, THE POTENTIAL EFFECT OF THE ACTIONS AND THE PROCESS BY WHICH DECISIONS WERE TAKEN.

LEST THERE BE ANY CONFUSION, I AM WRITING YOU AND CONGRESSMAN HILLIS TO ASSURE YOU OF THE FOLLOWING:  
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-- THE XM-1 PROGRAM WILL PROCEED INTO FULL SCALE ENGINEERING DEVELOPMENT WITH A SINGLE CONTRACTOR NO LATER THAN 17 NOVEMBER 1976. OUR OBJECTIVE, AS YOURS, REMAINS TO PUT INTO THE FIELD THE MOST COST-EFFECTIVE TANK FORCE AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE TIME.

-- IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, WE HAVE POINTED TOWARD A TURRET WHICH IS COMPATIBLE WITH BOTH 105MM AND 120MM GUNS. WE BELIEVE THIS IS PRUDENT PLANNING IN VIEW OF THE LOWER TOTAL COST, GIVEN THAT THE THREAT OF THE LATE 1980'S MAY WELL REQUIRE A GUN LARGER THAN 105MM. A TURRET CAPABLE OF BEING UP-GUNNED IS JUSTIFIED BY EXPERIENCE WITH THE M-48 TANK DESIGN, WHICH IS CURRENTLY BEING UP-GUNNED FROM 90MM TO 105MM. HOWEVER,

BEFORE CHANGING FROM A 105MM TO A 120MM GUN ON THE XM-1, COMPREHENSIVE PROOFING AND TESTING IS CLEARLY REQUIRED, AND I ASSURE YOU THAT THAT WILL BE THE CASE. WE WILL ENTER PRODUCTION OF THE XM-1 IN THE 105MM CONFIGURATION; WE HAVE NEVER CONSIDERED DOING OTHERWISE.

-- THE MOST SIGNIFICANT UNCERTAINTY IN THE XM-1 PROGRAM IS THAT INVOLVED IN THE DECISION BETWEEN DIESEL AND TURBINE POWER. THE FORMER IS ESTIMATED TO HAVE LOWER INITIAL COST, THE LATTER LOWER OPERATION AND SUPPORT COST. WE WILL NOT KNOW WHICH IS BETTER ON A LIFE-CYCLE BASIS UNTIL THE CURRENT EVALUATION IS COMPLETED. IN ANY CASE, THE CHOICE

WILL BE MADE BASED ON WHAT IS THE BEST POWER PLANT FOR THE XM-1; NOTHING IN THE ADDENDUM TO THE MOU, OR THE DECISION TO WITHHOLD SOURCE SELECTION UNTIL NO LATER THAN NOVEMBER 17, 1976, REQUIRES OTHERWISE.

-- BEFORE ONE CAN ASSESS THE COMBAT EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VARIOUS POSSIBLE CONFIGURATIONS, WE MUST AWAIT THE TECHNICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSALS. I ASSURE YOU THAT WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO THE MOST COMBAT EFFECTIVE TANK FORCE POSSIBLE OVER THE LIFETIME OF A TANK THAT WILL BE IN THE INVENTORY TO THE YEAR 2000. THE DECISION IN NOVEMBER TO PROCEED TO FULL SCALE ENGINEERING DEVELOPMENT WILL BE MADE ON THAT BASIS.

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IN SHORT, I BELIEVE OUR OBJECTIVES AND THOSE OF THE PANEL ARE NOT FAR APART.

I HOPE THAT THESE COMMITMENTS ON MY PART ARE SUFFICIENT TO CLARIFY ANY PREVIOUS MISUNDERSTANDING, AND THEREBY ASSURE YOU AND THE COMMITTEE THAT YOUR EXPRESSED GOALS FOR THIS VITAL PROGRAM WILL BE ACHIEVED.

SINCERELY, DONALD RUMSFELD.

END TEXT.

ROBINSON

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